AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph on page 14, beginning at line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

Within Ethernet network 120, it is appreciated that if two or more of half duplex NICs 222-234 and 118 try to transmit a data packet or frame at the same time, a collision of those packets will occur. As such, each half duplex NIC involved in the collision backs off a random amount of time before trying to retransmit their respective data packet. Each one of half duplex NICs 222-234 and 118 is allowed 16 collisions to transmit a particular data packet before discarding it in order to begin transmitting a subsequent data packet. Additionally, as the number of collisions of a particular data packet increases up to the value of 10, half duplex NICs 222-234 have an increased possibility of backing off for a longer amount of time. As to this particular functionality, it is important to note that half duplex NIC 118 of computer station 100 does not operate in the same manner as half duplex NICs 222-234 of computer stations 202-214.

Please replace the first paragraph on page 18, beginning at line 19, with the following amended paragraph:

Referring still to Figure 3, the outputs of AND gate 306 are coupled to inputs of masked number register 308. As such, masked number signal 314 is output by AND gate 306 to masked number register 308, which is a 16 bit register. Masked number register 308 outputs the restricted value represented by masked number signal 314 to half duplex NIC 118. In order to determine the length of its back off time, half duplex NIC 118 of the present embodiment ~~multiples~~ multiplies the value of masked number signal 314 by 512 clock cycles. The resulting number of clock cycles is the determined length of time for the back off time of half duplex NIC 118. As such, the determined back off time of half duplex NIC 118 is restricted to a shorter amount of time.